

the latest estimate from the United States Treasury, Americans spent 6.1 billion hours complying with the Tax Code. We also need a more competitive Tax Code. The United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the world.

Simplifying our Tax Code and closing loopholes for everyone will help create an environment that encourages job growth and increases wages. The Ryan budget is based on such reforms. These reforms can help get Americans back to work.

RECOGNIZING THE MERCED COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION TASK FORCE

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, in Boston, we were reminded how vulnerable we all are as Americans and how important it is that we stay together.

Today, I rise to recognize the Merced Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Task Force. This hardworking organization in the San Joaquin Valley that I represent is the 2013 recipient of the Lois Haight Award of Excellence and Innovation from the Victims' Rights Caucus, of which I am a cochair.

The task force is an innovative collaboration of local leaders that was formed in 2006 in response to gang-related violence throughout the Merced community. The task force makes Merced a safer place by educating the community about violence, promoting character development, and providing information to families and, most importantly, our youth.

From gang awareness workshops to Merced County's first anonymous "text a tip" line, the task force has contributed greatly to our Merced community and throughout the area.

On behalf of the Victims' Rights Caucus, congratulations and thank you to the Merced Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Task Force.

□ 1230

TAX REFORM

(Mr. STEWART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STEWART. Like all Americans, my heart and prayers go out to the people of Boston.

Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful for the opportunity to stand and speak on a very important issue today. It may not be as interesting, it may not grab as much attention as any other issue, but I'm not aware of any other thing that we could talk about that has the potential to invigorate our economy, to expand personal freedoms, and restore faith in our government and, frankly, in our future like this issue could. Of course I'm

talking about meaningful, strategic tax reform.

I was a business owner and CEO for 12 years. Because of that, I understand in a very personal way that the current tax system is rife with waste. It invites abuse. Worst of all, it creates so much uncertainty as to make it difficult, if not impossible, to make good decisions about our future.

Again and again, we read stories and we see examples where the current Tax Code punishes success while ignoring the economic impacts of poor government policy. We can do better than this. We have an opportunity to do better than this. We must do better. Everyone will benefit.

Let's do this now.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS IN BOSTON

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last Monday, men and women from around the world traveled to the beautiful city of Boston to take part in the 117th running of the Boston Marathon.

But this longstanding American tradition, this celebration of athletic achievement was shattered at 2:50 eastern time when two bombs went off along the finish line, killing three spectators, including an 8-year-old child, and injuring nearly 200 more.

At times like this, words fail to capture the sense of our disbelief, the pain in our hearts, and the anger we feel towards anyone who would do such great harm to so many innocent lives.

Although we do not yet know the identity of the perpetrators, what we do know is that our country will not rest until they are brought to justice. The American people will emerge from this horrific incident stronger and more united than ever before.

Like all Rhode Islanders since last Monday, my thoughts have remained with the people of Boston and all of the victims of this vicious act of violence and their loved ones, and I pray that the passage of time might bring them some level of comfort.

TAX REFORM

(Mr. DESJARLAIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, this week, many of my constituents filed tax returns. Unfortunately, their taxes weren't the only thing that they had to pay. Hardworking Americans will spend \$168 billion completing their taxes under our country's 4-million-word Tax Code.

America's tax system is broken and simply doesn't meet the needs of the 21st century economy. It is time for a simpler, fairer, flatter code, one that eliminates special interest loopholes to ensure that everyone pays what they

owe. But what we don't need is higher taxes.

The government is already poised to take in record revenues this year, yet the President insists on calling for another \$1.1 trillion in new taxes. Levying more taxes on families and businesses won't create jobs and won't lead to economic prosperity. Rather, we need to cut spending, balance the budget, and rein in excessive government.

Comprehensive tax reform is something that the American people overwhelmingly support and something that House Republicans remain committed to addressing.

GUN REFORM

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, background checks may not have changed what happened at Sandy Hook, but I hope Sandy Hook changes what happens here.

Ninety percent of the American people agree that expanding background checks for gun sales is the right thing to do. These checks will help keep guns out of the hands of the mentally unstable, convicted felons, and domestic abusers who threaten the safety of our families and our communities.

It's time for Congress to listen to common sense and the voices of the American people.

I say to my Senate colleagues: You came here to work for the American people, not just to work for your reelection. We're here to do a job, not just keep our jobs.

I support Senators MANCHIN and TOOMEY for coming together in a bipartisan way to push forward this legislation for expanded background checks. All we need is 60 Senators who have the courage to stand up and do the right thing.

Commonsense measures to fight tragedy shouldn't be a heavy lift. This should be an easy vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. KING of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor here to announce that the Senate released their Gang of Eight immigration bill sometime around 2:45 a.m. this morning. It didn't take very long for the secret group in the House to release their support for the bill. They had time, apparently, to analyze the 844 pages that are in this bill.

I've had time to analyze a little bit of it. Mr. Speaker, what it says is this: they want to instantaneously legalize everybody that's here in America illegally, with a few exceptions, in case they decide to enforce the law against them.